

□ 1045

FREE HOUSTON METRO HOT LANE ACCESS FOR DISABLED VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, this morning I spent some time, and last evening, communicating with leaders of my transit system, Houston METRO, that has received numerous awards; and I applaud them for working very hard, sometimes against odds, to provide mobility for the great citizens of the Houston, Harris County, metroplex area.

I had a particular beef, or a particular issue, that we have been working on since last November, and that is to give disabled veterans in this very vast territory of Texas the ability to ride on what we call the HOT lanes for free.

My premise is simple. When we ask our men and women in the United States to put the uniform on, we ask, with no qualifications, meaning no restraints, that they are expected to defend the United States to the utmost. In the course of that, some fall in battle, lose their lives, or are veterans who ultimately come to their demise by their age and illnesses. Therefore, I think it is enormously important that, when they make a request that helps them in their mobility, whether it is to doctors' offices and family or going back to school, there should be no barriers, no restraints.

So today my METRO board is meeting, and I made contact again, as I did this past week, with the committee, late into the night, to say that there should be no delay, no barrier in allowing those lanes to be used for free by disabled vets.

I want this in the RECORD because I will pursue and persist, even to the extent that an emergency board meeting will need to be called. There just simply is no reason to delay. November, December, January, February, and near March, there is no reason to delay.

I am waiting for the decision, and I will look forward to the Disabled Veterans of America and others reaching out to my office so that together, collectively, we can make sure that not only does this happen in Houston, Texas, but that it be a policy across America.

We should find a way to be able to assist those who have willingly, without any hesitancy, and unselfishly, put on the uniform.

RESPECT FOR THE THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to turn the attention of my colleagues to another issue of justice, and that is the fair existence of and respect for the three branches of government.

This involves vets and nurses and schools and school teachers and families across America. It is a process that the Congress goes through every year.

We call it the budgeting process; and it is an act of Congress and the administration, we hope, working together.

That is the time that the Congress works on the plan for the American people; and it is, of course, the time when the President works on the plan for the American people. It includes reports like this, an economic report of the President. It includes the budget, which is the roadmap for the American people.

Let me be very clear. We are all elected; but there is one person—in this instance, one man—that has been elected by all of the people, and he has submitted a budget.

I would not ever imagine in my tenure in Congress that we would have this Congress overlook a 41-year tradition for the American people, on their behalf, whether you are for it or against it: the right of the representative of the President, in this instance, Shaun Donovan, the President's Budget Director, to make his presentation before the United States Congress.

If I were not standing on this floor, Mr. Speaker, I might simply break down and cry, because I love this institution. I love the constitutional processes documented in the Constitution of the three separate branches of government. We have often disagreed, but we have and should never disrespect.

G. William Hoagland, who was the Republican staff director at the Senate Budget Committee for much of the 1980s and 1990s, now senior vice president of the Bipartisan Policy Center, could not recall a year, since the Martin budget process took effect in the 1970s, when a President's Budget Director was not invited to testify, Republican or Democrat.

While the last budget of an outgoing President is usually aspirational and sets a tone for what he or she hopes will be followed up by, it is not and has not been a time to not see the President's budget. The President's budget is good for education and job creation and national security, and it does not cut, as the Republican budget does, Mr. Speaker, 46 percent in education.

Where is our collegiality?

Shame on us. Let the President's man speak on the budget.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 50 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana) at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Merciful God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

As we meditate on the blessings of life, we especially pray for the blessing of peace in our lives and in our world.

As You have created each person, we pray that You would guide our hearts and minds that every person of every place and background might focus on Your great gift of life and so learn to live in unity.

May Your special blessings be upon the Members of this assembly in the important, sometimes difficult, work they do. Give them wisdom and charity that they might work together for the common good.

May all that is done this day in the people's House be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. FITZPATRICK led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

TEAM VERMILLION'S EFFORTS TO BEAT LEUKEMIA AND LYMPHOMA ARE A FITTING TRIBUTE TO STEVE VERMILLION

(Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the legacy of a dear friend and long-time public servant, Steve Vermillion, who passed away in 2012 from acute myeloid leukemia.

Steve began his career here in the House in 1986, working for colleagues like JIM SENSENBRENNER and Lincoln Diaz-Balart. He was a strong defender of democracy and human rights, especially when it came to U.S. policy toward Cuba, and he helped cofound the